

Matthew J. Avoletta's personal statement.

I attended Torrington Elementary School from kindergarten until June 2003, the end of fifth grade. I don't remember every detail exactly but I do remember often times I felt sick with stuffy and runny noses, itchy eyes & throat, headache, tight chest, difficulty breathing, sore throat and tired symptoms. I missed many days of school because I was too sick. I also attended school many days feeling terrible because it was too difficult to make up lost school work. I had many visits to my pediatrician and constantly received more and more medicine to take daily. Throughout most of my elementary and middle school years I had so many different doses of different medicines it was a burden just trying to keep track of the medication. It was also difficult keeping track of school work and other activities because I always felt like I was in a fog and groggy.

During my fourth and fifth grade school year I played in the school band. Our concert took place in the Torrington Middle School auditorium and shortly after performing in the auditorium, I got so sick that I missed the next school day and had to go to the doctors, again. A few other times, before the beginning of the following school years, I visited the Middle School again and got sick right away with, burning, scratchy throat, itchy eyes, headache, runny and stuffed nose and felt tired. These symptoms got better after I left the school.

Two of my other doctors, Dr. Santilli & Dr. Randolph told me I could not attend the Torrington Middle School & Dr. Santilli told me I could not attend the Torrington High School until the buildings were fixed. Instead I attended Chase Collegiate in Waterbury because it was safe & clean & there was no other Middle School or regular High School in Torrington. I was sad to leave all my friends. I lost touch with them because I left the community and went to school out of town, 30 minutes away from everyone. I spent most of my time in Waterbury, coming home late in the day. It was very hard to adjust to but my health is much better now although I still have to drive all the way to Bridgeport often to get needles. In the beginning, it was every week but now less often.

I like to play basketball and other sports. I like having a lot of friends and hanging out with them regularly. When I made the transition from a fairly large public school to a small private school, I was very upset. The athletic dept. at my new school were not taken seriously, therefore not competitive. A social life and an athletic life are very important to me. Both were missing from this small school.

I am now much healthier because I'm off all the medications other than getting needles and taking benadryl whenever symptoms return. I can think clearer now, focus better and feel good most of the time. I continue to improve with my school & homework assignments. In the beginning of the school years during my 6th & 7th grade, I could not participate in all sports, especially cross country. That has also improved. I am now able to play varsity sports year round without experiencing shortness of breath, as in the past. And I don't need to take my Albuterol inhaler anymore.

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